

What Child is this? – Matthew 1:18-25 Sermon Discussion Participant's Guide

Purpose of Discussion: To better understand why Christians believe that Jesus is "God with us" and to apply the truth of "God with us" to one aspect of our lives.

Sermon Refresher: In the midst of the hustle and bustle of Christmas, it can be easy to forget the radical claim that Jesus makes about himself. By his words and actions, Jesus claimed to be God himself, the creator of the universe, coming to be with us in the flesh. The truth of that has tremendous consequences for our lives.

Icebreaker: 2 options, pick which one best fits your group

1. What's something that has surprised you about your child(ren)?
2. What's a Christmas tradition that you especially enjoy?

Discussion:

1. Let's do a mental exercise together. Read Matthew 1:18-25 as if it's the first time you've ever read it or heard this story. What surprises or confuses you?

18 This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. 19 Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 25 But he did not

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consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

2. What aspects of this account show that this baby Jesus is divine?
3. Many people believe that Jesus was a good moral teacher but do not believe that he is God. Take turns reading the following scriptures. How do Jesus' words and actions make a claim to be God?

Luke 5:20-26
Matthew 19:29
Matthew 7:21-23
John 8:58
John 8:12
John 11:25
John 14:6

4. In your mind, what is the most convincing reason to believe Jesus is God?
5. If Jesus is God, then he is the rightful king and authority in our lives. What is one specific way that you would like to live more in line with this truth?
6. If Jesus is God, then God has entered into our world and our suffering to be with us and to give us hope. Think of some suffering or hardship you are experiencing (or have experienced recently). How could Jesus' experience of suffering and promise to be with you in your suffering be an encouragement to you?

Sharing and Prayer: Share concerns and needs for prayer. Pray for each other that the reality of Jesus being "God with us" will give encouragement and hope to each person and their situation.